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Programme planning

Report on the activities of the Office of Internal Oversight Services

Strengthening the role of evaluation and the application of evaluation findings on programme design, delivery and policy directives

Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services

Summary

The present report, which has been prepared in accordance with regulation 7.4 of the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation (ST/SGB/2000/8), is the fourteenth biennial report in a series of studies that have been submitted to the General Assembly through the Committee for Programme and Coordination. Using both qualitative and quantitative methods and covering the 2012-2013 biennium, the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) assessed the Secretariat's evaluation capacity, quality and utility and synthesized key results contained in a sample of evaluation reports. This report also presents the OIOS evaluation workplan for 2016-2017 and summarizes the implementation of prior Committee recommendations aimed at improving the quality of Secretariat evaluations.

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Compared with the prior biennium, there have been some positive developments in 2012-2013 regarding the Secretariat's evaluation function. Evaluation processes and procedures have been strengthened, as evidenced, for example, by the adoption of new evaluation policies by six entities and an increase in the number of entities following up on recommendations from evaluations. These improvements, however, did not translate into higher-quality evaluation reports. Fewer reports received overall positive ratings in 2012-2013 than in 2010-2011 (38 per cent compared with 49 per cent) and evaluation continued to be concentrated in a relatively small number of entities.

Furthermore, gaps identified in the previous biennium, including insufficient resources, inadequate staff competencies and limited buy-in from senior management and staff, persisted in the present one. Focal points from the Secretariat entities cited these very issues as constituting the biggest challenges that they faced in strengthening their respective evaluation functions.

OIOS makes three important recommendations to the Secretariat entities for strengthening their evaluation function:

(a) Develop an evaluation policy;

(b) Establish key evaluation procedures, such as an evaluation workplan, an action plan for implementing evaluation recommendations, and a dissemination plan for evaluation results;

(c) Improve the existing guidelines on planning and formulating the estimated resources for monitoring and evaluation activities.

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I. Introduction

1. The present report is the fourteenth in a series of studies that have been submitted biennially since 1988 to the General Assembly through the Committee for Programme and Coordination, in accordance with the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation (ST/SGB/2000/8).[1] Comments on the report from Secretariat entities were incorporated as appropriate.

2. The objectives of this report are to:

(a) Describe and assess the capacity, quality and utility of the evaluation functions in the Secretariat during the 2012-2013 biennium;[2]

(b) Identify key results contained in a sample of evaluation reports finalized during the 2012-2013 biennium.

3. The report presents the evaluation workplan of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) and reports on the implementation of recommendations made by the Committee for Programme and Coordination in the previous biennial report. OIOS will issue a companion report in the second quarter of 2015 containing scorecards for each Secretariat entity and providing more detailed information regarding evaluation practice and capacity.

4. In concluding its discussion on the previous biennial report, the Committee for Programme and Coordination emphasized that evaluation was a key function with respect to adopting budgetary decisions, since it helped to improve programme design and execution, and formulate policy directives, and contributed to transparency. Evaluation allowed Member States to follow up on programme outcomes in a systematic way. The Committee emphasized that self-evaluation was an essential managerial tool, and that it was the responsibility of senior managers to achieve expected results.[3]

5. There are two types of evaluation conducted in the Secretariat: (a) evaluation undertaken by OIOS or external oversight bodies, in which the evaluation function is external to the entity being evaluated; and (b) evaluation undertaken by the entities themselves, in which the evaluation function is embedded within the entities being evaluated. Both types of evaluation are complementary and necessary, in order to ensure a comprehensive evaluation approach throughout the Secretariat, and serve to inform programme accountability and lessons learned for programme improvement. Evaluation functions also exist along a continuum of independence, ranging from complete organizational independence, such as that of the Joint Inspection Unit, to integration with other programme management functions, such as some embedded functions.

[1] The report has been prepared pursuant to regulation 7.4, which requires that a brief report summarizing the conclusions of the Secretary-General on all evaluation studies be submitted to the General Assembly at the same time as the proposed medium-term plan (now the "strategic framework").

[2] In the present report, "the Secretariat" refers to the 32 entities within the mandate of OIOS (including OIOS itself), as identified in annex I.

[3] See A/68/16, paras. 151-152.

II. Methodology

6. The study discussed in this report encompassed 32 Secretariat entities and used the following methods:

(a) Quantitative and qualitative analyses of evaluation reports finalized in 2012-2013 by 32 entities to determine their attributes, quality and key results (see annex II for information on how those reports were collected and selected for analyses);

(b) A web-based survey of 31 Secretariat entities, conducted from July to September 2014, which had a 100 per cent response rate;[4]

(c) In-person or telephone interviews with focal points from 31 Secretariat entities;[5]

(d) An assessment of new or revised evaluation policies from 2012-2013;[6]

(e) An assessment of planned evaluation budgets for 2012-2013.

7. This report had the following limitations: (a) OIOS might not have received all evaluation reports finalized during 2012-2013, despite having guided focal points on the submission of reports from their respective entities; (b) different sampling methodologies of reports over the past three bienniums to determine their attributes, quality and key results may have limited their comparison; and (c) OIOS did not verify all of the self-reported information received from evaluation focal points who provided responses to the survey and interviews. In some instances, results varied depending on the data-collection method. Analyses were triangulated using multiple data sources to balance these potential limitations and strengthen the report's results. While recognizing that entities may have different evaluation needs and practices, OIOS used the same analytical criteria for all entities in this report in order to present a Secretariat-wide assessment of the evaluation function.

III. Evaluation practice

A. There have been some positive developments in 2012-2013 regarding the Secretariat's evaluation functions

There has been some strengthening of Secretariat structures supporting the evaluation functions

8. In 2012-2013, there were positive developments in Secretariat structures supporting evaluation. Table 1 illustrates differences in the institutional set-ups of

[4] Thirty respondents participated in the survey, representing 31 entities. OIOS was excluded from the survey. The same focal point represented the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Field Support. Not all survey responses were complete; percentages reported are based on the denominator of responses to a specific question.

[5] Interviews were conducted with 30 focal points, representing 31 entities. OIOS was excluded from the interviews. The same focal point represented the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Field Support.

[6] The assessment was based on the United Nations Evaluation Group Norms and Standards for Evaluation in the United Nations System (UNEG/FN/Norms (2005) and UNEG/FN/Standards (2005)). OIOS was excluded from the assessment.

30 evaluation functions representing 31 Secretariat entities, it shows that a large majority (23 of 30) had some evaluation activity and that more than half (17 of 30) had an evaluation unit.

Table 1

Secretariat structures of the evaluation functions by the end of 2013[a]

Stand-alone evaluation unit	*Dedicated evaluation unit within a multifunctional division*	*Unit not dedicated to evaluation (includes other services) within a multifunctional division*	*Not evaluation but has evaluation activity*	*Minimal or no evaluation activity*
UNEP	DPKO/DFS	DGACM	DESA	DSS
UN-Habitat	ECA	DPI	DM	ODA
UNODC	ESCAP	ECLAC	DPA	OLA
UN-Women	OCHA	ESCWA	ECE	OOSA
	UNRWA	ITC	OHRLLS	UNOG
		OHCHR	OSAA	UNON
		UNCTAD		UNOV
		UNHCR		

Source: OIOS survey and interviews.

Abbreviations: DESA, Department of Economic and Social Affairs; DFS, Department of Field Support; DGACM, Department for General Assembly and Conference Management; DM, Department of Management; DPA, Department of Political Affairs; DPI, Department of Public Information; DPKO, Department of Peacekeeping Operations; DSS, Department of Safety and Security; ECA, Economic Commission for Africa; ECE, Economic Commission for Europe; ECLAC, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean; ESCAP, Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific; ESCWA, Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia; ITC, International Trade Centre; OCHA, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs; ODA, Office for Disarmament Affairs; OHCHR, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights; OHRLLS, Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States; OIOS, Office of Internal Oversight Services; OLA, Office of Legal Affairs; OOSA, Office for Outer Space Affairs; OSAA, Office of the Special Adviser on Africa; UNCTAD, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development; UNEP, United Nations Environment Programme; UN-Habitat, United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat); UNHCR, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees; UNODC, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime; UNRWA, United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East; UNOG, United Nations Office at Geneva; UNON, United Nations Office at Nairobi; UNOV, United Nations Office at Vienna; and UN-Women, United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women).

[a] Rule 107.2 (b) of the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation states: "The evaluation system shall include periodic self-evaluation of activities directed at time-limited objectives and continuing functions".

9. By the end of 2013, four functions had a stand-alone evaluation unit dedicated solely to conducting evaluations. Five had a dedicated evaluation unit placed within a multifunctional division that also carried out strategic planning, oversight, training and/or guidance functions. Staff in these five units, however, were tasked exclusively with evaluation work, thus ensuring a firewall between evaluation and other management activities. Additionally, eight functions had units within multifunctional divisions with the same staff engaged in evaluation and other activities, such as monitoring, research, partnerships, planning and policy development. Six additional functions performed some evaluation activities without a separate unit. These entities typically had a coordinator and network of staff embedded in substantive divisions who spent a small portion of their time on evaluation activities. Last, seven evaluation functions conducted minimal or no evaluation activity in the 2012-2013 biennium.

10. Compared with 2010-2011, two entities notably improved the independence of their evaluation functions: The United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) separated its monitoring and evaluation functions to establish a dedicated evaluation unit in January 2012; and towards the end of 2013, ECA created a dedicated evaluation unit, prior to which evaluation activities had been carried out with monitoring, and embedded in programme planning.

11. Reporting lines remained comparable to those of 2010-2011. Among stand-alone evaluation units, three reported directly to the head of the entity, while the Independent Evaluation Unit of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime reported to both the Executive Director and its governing body. Units within multifunctional divisions reported to the directors of their respective divisions, with the exception of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations/Department of Field Support and the Department of Public Information, which reported to their respective Under-Secretaries-General. The independence of reporting lines in the International Trade Centre weakened in 2013 when its Monitoring and Evaluation Unit began reporting to the Chief of Strategic Planning instead of to the Executive Director.

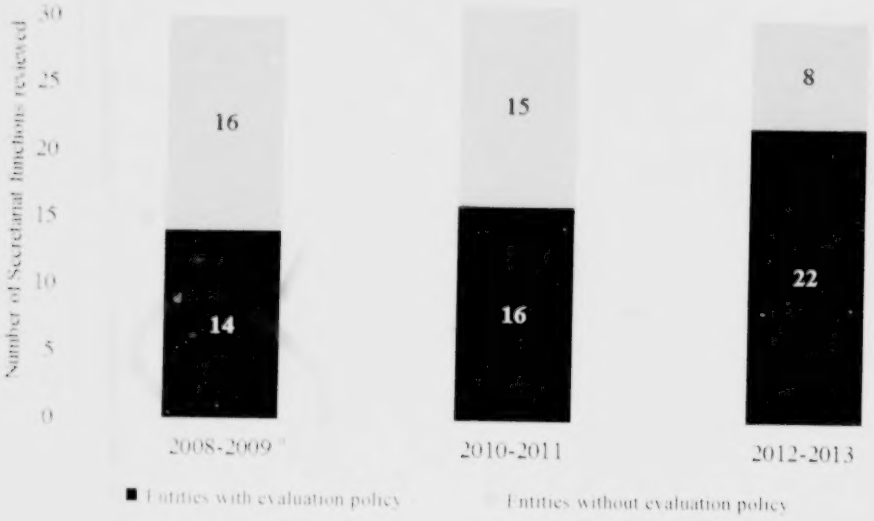
Evaluation processes and procedures have also been strengthened

12. The 2012-2013 biennium saw positive developments in introducing new or revising existing evaluation policies, as evidenced by the key documents outlining the principles, norms and standards for evaluation. As shown in figure I, the number of evaluation functions with evaluation policies has been steadily increasing since 2008. In 2012-2013, the number of functions with an evaluation policy increased significantly, by 20 per cent. A total of 22 functions had an evaluation policy, compared with 16 in 2010-2011 and 14 in 2008-2009. Of the 22, 2 functions revised their evaluation policies, while 6 introduced new ones in 2012 or 2013.[7] When surveyed about significant changes to their evaluation practice, approximately one

[7] Revised policies: Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in 2013 and United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) in 2012; new policies: Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Department of Management, Department of Political Affairs, Economic Commission for Africa, Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, and United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat).

third of evaluation focal points referred to a new or revised evaluation policy. Eight functions (27 per cent) still do not have an evaluation policy.[8]

Figure I
Evaluation functions with evaluation policies, 2008-2013



Source: OIOS review of evaluation policies.

[a] Thirty functions were included in the 2008-2009 and 2012-2013 biennial studies, while 31 (including the Executive Office of the Secretary-General) were included in the 2010-2011 report.

13. The overall quality of evaluation policies remained the same as in 2010-2011. The average rating for the 22 policies in 2012-2013 was 1.5 on a three-point scale, where 0 = "standard was not met", 1 = "standard was somewhat met" and 2 = "standard was met". Three entities (the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) had policies that received a rating of 2 on all standards. In terms of strengths, all policies generally defined evaluation and its purpose (including accountability and learning) and described how entities followed up on evaluation results. On the other hand, policies received generally lower ratings for: not identifying competencies for evaluators (with 12 policies not mentioning them at all) or not defining criteria for selecting evaluations.

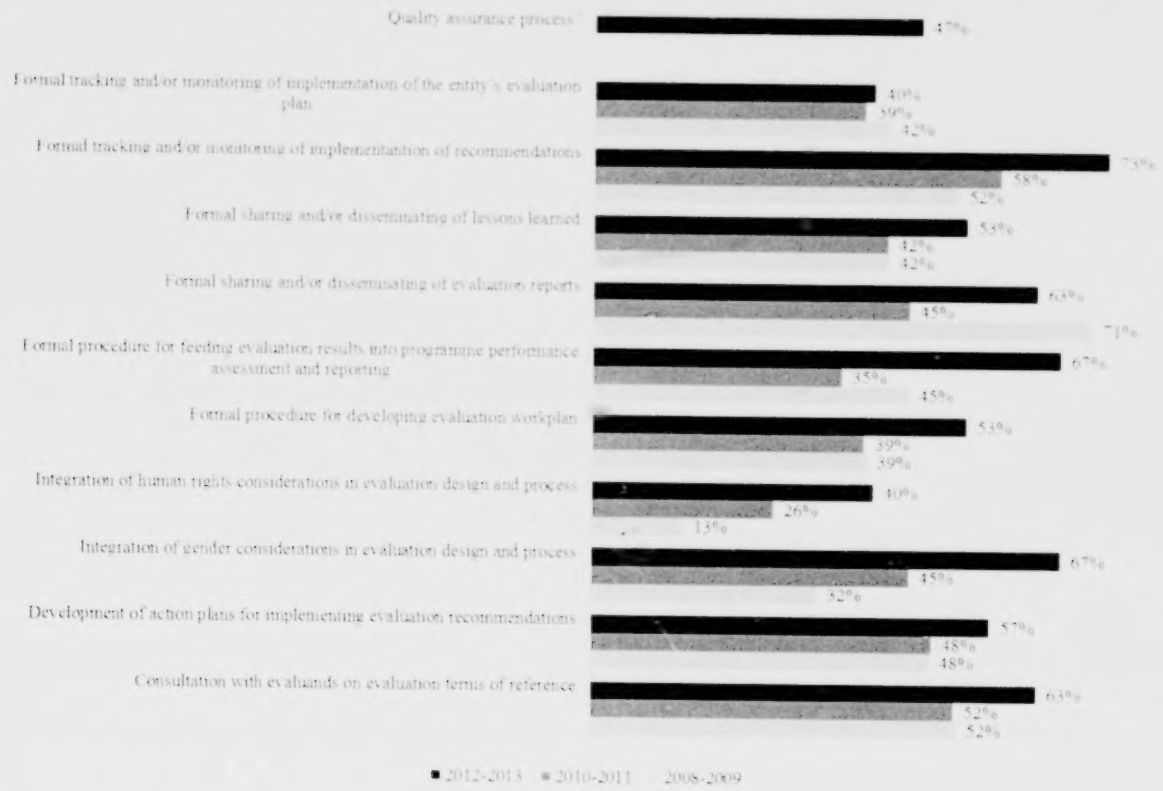
14. There were also improvements in key evaluation processes and procedures across the Secretariat in 2012-2013 (see figure II). More than half of all focal points

[8] Department for General Assembly and Conference Management, Department of Public Information, Department of Safety and Security, Office of Legal Affairs, Office for Outer Space Affairs, United Nations Office at Geneva, United Nations Office at Nairobi and United Nations Office at Vienna.

(53 per cent or more) reported having in place at least 8 out of the 11 evaluation processes and procedures identified below.

Figure II

Evaluation processes and procedures of 30 evaluation functions, 2008 to 2013



Source: OIOS survey.

[a] Reported only in the 2012-2013 biennium.

15. Compared with the two prior bienniums, improvements have been reported for processes and procedures for following up on recommendations. Seventy-three per cent of focal points surveyed reported that formal tracking and/or monitoring of implementation of recommendations was were in place for 2012-2013, compared with 58 per cent in 2010-2011 and 52 per cent in 2008-2009. Furthermore, 67 per cent of focal points surveyed reported having a formal procedure for feeding evaluation results into programme performance assessment and reporting, compared with 35 per cent in 2010-2011 and 45 per cent in 2008-2009. When surveyed about the most significant evaluation successes in their entities in 2012-2013, the most common response from focal points was strengthened evaluation processes and procedures (mentioned by 50 per cent), including better use of evaluation results, recommendation follow-up and participation of programme managers and stakeholders.

16. Dissemination practices have improved compared with the previous two bienniums. Almost two thirds of focal point survey respondents (63 per cent) indicated that formal sharing and/or dissemination of evaluation reports occurred in their entities, compared with 45 per cent in the previous biennium. Forty per cent of focal points reported that their entities disseminated results internally only (mostly through e-mails or by placing them on the intranet), while 60 per cent responded that they shared results internally and externally (mostly by placing them on the Internet). Slightly more than half of focal points (53 per cent) reported having procedures of formal sharing and/or disseminating of lessons learned, compared with 42 per cent in both 2010-2011 and 2008-2009.

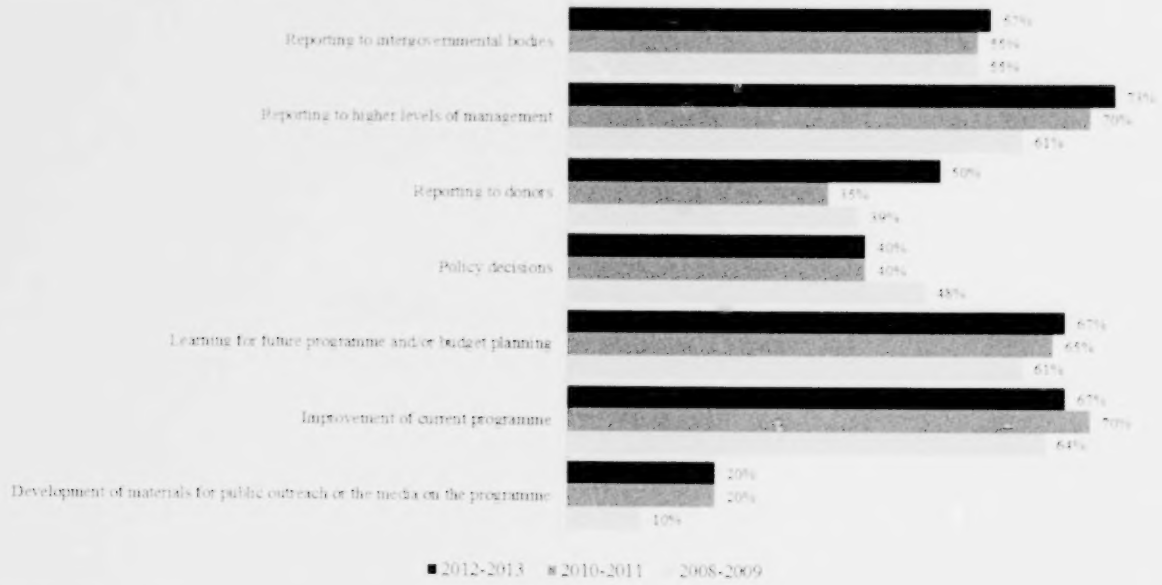
17. Additionally, gender was increasingly integrated into evaluation design and process. Two thirds of focal points surveyed reported that gender considerations were integrated into conducted evaluations, compared with 45 per cent in 2010-2011 and 32 per cent in 2008-2009.

18. Despite these improvements, progress for some processes and procedures continued to be uneven. Fewer than half of evaluation focal points surveyed (approximately 40 per cent) reported that their entities formally tracked and/or monitored the implementation of their entity's evaluation plan for all three bienniums. Additionally, although integrating human rights in evaluation design and process improved over the three bienniums, fewer than half of the focal points (40 per cent) reported that this had occurred in 2012-2013.

Evaluation focal points reported fewer gains in the utility and outcomes of evaluation reports

19. Compared with the previous two bienniums, there have been fewer improvements regarding the utility of and outcomes resulting from evaluation reports (see figure III). Similar to 2010-2011, about 70 per cent of focal points surveyed reported that their entities used information from evaluations in reporting to higher levels of management, in improving their current programmes and in future programming and/or budget planning. The one notable improvement between the two bienniums was in the use of evaluations to report to donors, which increased from 35 per cent in 2010-2011 to 50 per cent in 2012-2013.

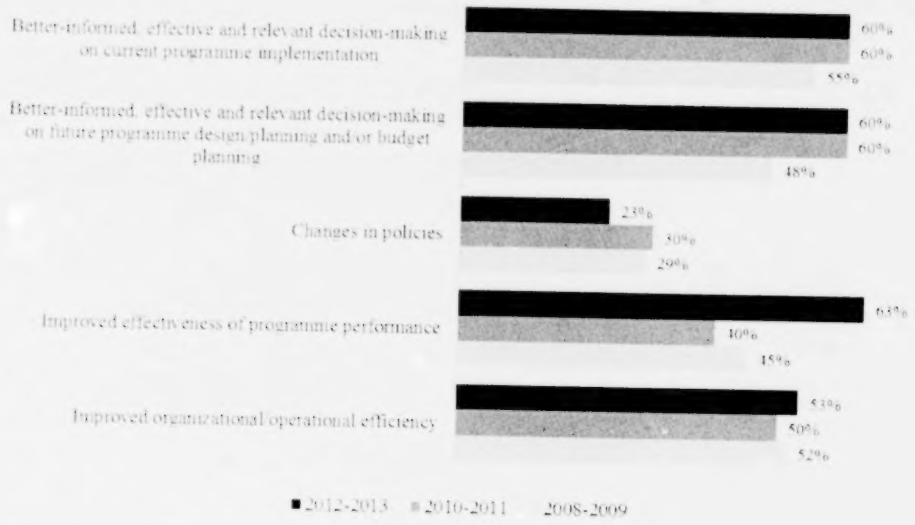
Figure III
Use of evaluation reports of 30 evaluation functions, 2008-2013


Reporting to intergovernmental bodies
Reporting to higher levels of management
Reporting to donors
Policy decisions
Learning for future programme and/or budget planning
Improvement of current programme
Development of materials for public outreach or the media on the programme
2012-2013
2010-2011
2008-2009

Source: OIOS survey.

20. Focal points reported similar levels of outcomes resulting from evaluation reports for each of the three bienniums (see figure IV). The notable exception in this regard was improved effectiveness of programme performance due to evaluation, which increased from 40 per cent in 2010-2011 to 63 per cent in 2012-2013. However, the same proportion of evaluation focal points surveyed in both 2010-2011 and 2012-2013 (60 per cent), reported that the reports resulted in better-informed, effective and relevant decision-making on current programme implementation and future programme design planning and/or budget planning. In their elaboration, nine focal points indicated that evaluation results have informed decisions on programme planning and implementation, including feeding into the development of strategic frameworks. The proportion of focal points reporting changes in policies due to evaluations decreased to 23 per cent in 2012-2013 from 30 per cent in 2010-2011.

Figure IV
Outcomes of evaluation reports of 30 evaluation functions, 2008-2013



Source: OIOS survey.

B. The overall quality of evaluation reports has not improved

21. Despite an increase in the overall number of evaluation reports submitted to OIOS and improvements in some entities, the overall quality of reports has not improved.[9] As shown in figure V, fewer sampled reports received overall ratings of good or excellent in 2012-2013 than in 2010-2011 (38 per cent compared with 49 per cent); and more reports received ratings of fair or poor. The entities whose reports received an average rating of good or higher were ECLAC, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, OIOS, the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), UNHCR and UNODC.

[9] In 2012-2013, 379 reports were submitted and 298 were screened as evaluations (79 per cent). In 2010-2011, 297 reports were submitted and 153 were so screened (52 per cent). In 2008-2009, 279 reports were submitted and 166 were so screened (59 per cent).

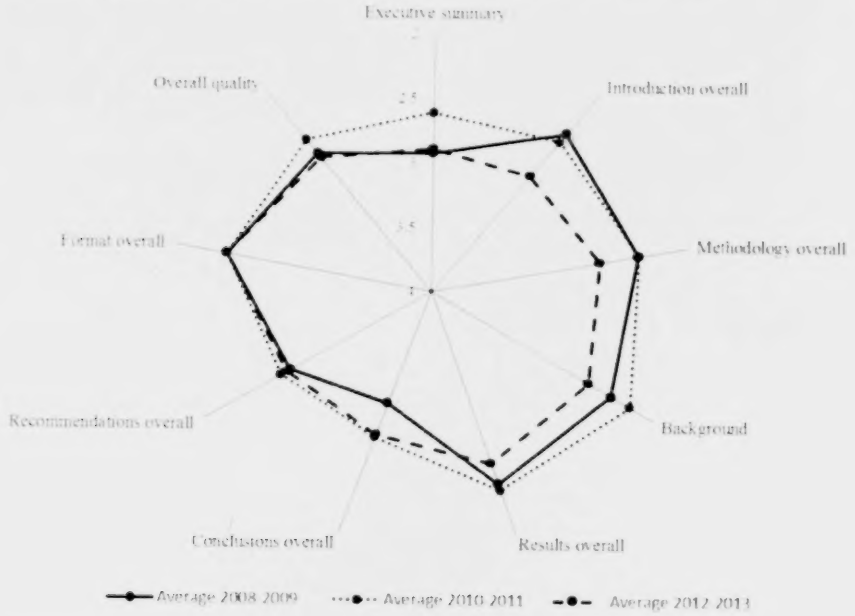
Figure V
Overall quality of sampled reports, 2008-2013

Source: OIOS assessment of sampled evaluation reports.

22. To account for the difference in the number of screened reports among the evaluation functions, a weighted average rating was used. The weighted average of the overall quality of the 102 sampled reports resulted in a score of 2.65, while the weighted average of the 298 screened reports resulted in a score of 2.60, on a scale where 1 = "excellent", 2 = "good", 3 = "fair", 4 = "poor" and 5 = "very poor". No reports were rated very poor. In general, functions that submitted more reports received similar scores to those with fewer reports.

23. Overall, ratings for different sections of evaluation reports were similar for each of the three bienniums (see figure VI). In 2012-2013, the introduction, methodology, background and results sections received slightly lower ratings than during the two previous bienniums. Each section received an overall rating of "fair" with the exception of report format, which received a good rating overall.

Figure VI
Quality of evaluation report sections over the last three bienniums



Source: OIOS assessment of 102 sampled evaluation reports. No reports received a "very poor" rating.

Table 2 summarizes good practices and opportunities for improvement in each of the main sections of the evaluation reports reviewed.

Table 2
Summary of assessment by report section

Evaluation report section	*Average rating*	*Good practices*	*Opportunities for improvement*
Executive summary	Fair (2.90)	– Summarize key results, conclusions and recommendations – Clearly identify executive summary section	– Include an executive summary – Refer to methodology – Distinguish between results and conclusions
Introduction overall	Fair (2.83)	– Reference author – Specify evaluation subjects	– Specify scope, key questions and criteria – State time frame
Methodology overall	Fair (2.68)	– Describe data sources and collection methods	– Address methodological challenges and limitations – Describe analysis methods

Evaluation report section	*Average rating*	*Good practices*	*Opportunities for improvement*
Background	Fair (2.58)	– Provide information to enable understanding of the context within which evaluand operates	– Provide sufficient contextual information to enable understanding of the reason for intervention
Results overall	Fair (2.58)	– Formulate specific results	– Clearly identify results section – Discuss underlying causes for accomplishments/difficulties – Distinguish results with evaluators' opinions
Conclusions overall	Fair (2.81)	– Clearly identify conclusions	– Be forward-looking – Go beyond summarizing the results
Recommendations	Fair (2.73)	– Relate recommendations to results and conclusions – Limit number of recommendations – Make recommendations actionable	– Specify to whom recommendations are addressed
Format overall	Good (2.40)	– Make report easy to read and understand – Consider report's overall logic and cohesiveness	– Use visuals to illustrate important points and information

Source: OIOS assessment of sampled evaluation reports.

24. Incorporating gender and human rights considerations remained a weak cross-cutting area. About half of the 102 reports (52) considered gender issues in their results; however, only 19 reports considered them in their methodology. Incorporation of human rights considerations was even less frequent, with 18 reports including them in their results and 7 in their methodology. These results, based on an independent assessment of evaluation reports, were less positive than what was reported by focal points in the survey on integration of human rights and gender considerations into evaluation design and process.

C. The overall Secretariat evaluation capacity and culture still require strengthening, and significant gaps remain in evaluation coverage

25. Despite the positive developments regarding the Secretariat's evaluation functions and some individual exceptions, the capacity for, and implementation of a culture of, evaluation remain uneven and inadequate. In concluding its consideration of the 2010-2011 biennial report, the Committee for Programme and Coordination

expressed concern that the overall capacity for evaluation remained inadequate for reasons, including:[10]

- Lack of clear identification of resources and dedicated personnel
- Gaps in the skills and competencies of staff Lack of a robust and comprehensive evaluation culture

26. During the 2012-2013 biennium, the same gaps remained, namely:

- Insufficient resources for evaluation
- Inadequate staff competencies
- Limited buy-in by senior management and staff

Capacity may be lacking

27. The adequacy of the level of resources dedicated to evaluation is unclear. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 58/269 entitled "Strengthening of the United Nations: an agenda for further change", each budget section is required to identify resources for activities related to monitoring and evaluation. According to the individual proposed programme budgets for 2012-2013, an estimated US$ 57.3 million was planned for monitoring and evaluation activities, which constituted approximately 0.002 per cent of the Secretariat's total planned budget (0.001 per cent for monitoring and 0.001 per cent for evaluation).[11] The percentages changed significantly from those of the 2010-2011 biennial report because peacekeeping missions were included in the calculation of the Secretariat's total planned budget for the 2012-2013 biennium. Excluding peacekeeping missions, the percentages were similar between the bienniums.[12]

28. While acknowledging that budgets come from different funding sources, with some entities funded predominantly by extrabudgetary resources, one must note that the accuracy and reliability of the monitoring and evaluation data in the proposed programme budgets are limited owing to entities' not tracking evaluation resources in a systematic or consistent manner. As also observed in the 2010-2011 biennial report, no standard has been established among the entities for differentiating between monitoring and evaluation activities and resources. According to the 2012-2013 proposed programme budgets, some entities that engaged in more evaluation activities than most other entities reported allocating zero per cent to evaluation,

[10] See A/68/16, para. 148.

[11] See A/66/6 (Introduction). In the analysis, OIOS used the figures for the total 2012-2013 planned budgets, as reported in the individual proposed programme budgets for the 2014-2015 biennium. Estimates reported in form 12 under "mandatory self-assessment" were used to calculate monitoring resources, and estimates reported under "discretionary self-evaluation" were used to calculate evaluation resources. The International Trade Centre was excluded from this calculation.

[12] Excluding peacekeeping missions, in 2012-2013, approximately 0.30 per cent of the Secretariat's total planned budget was allocated for monitoring and evaluation: 0.17 per cent for monitoring and 0.13 per cent for evaluation. In 2010-2011, approximately 0.29 per cent of the Secretariat's total planned budget was allocated for monitoring and evaluation: 0.15 per cent for monitoring and 0.14 per cent for evaluation.

while other entities with minimal evaluation reported greater planned estimates.[13] For example, two entities with dedicated evaluation units reported allocating zero per cent of their total budgets to evaluation, thus illustrating that the financial and human resources indicated in the proposed programme budgets may not reflect the actual practice of many entities.

29. Moreover, there is no universally accepted benchmark for assessing the adequacy of evaluation resources; rather, different calculations exist within the evaluation profession. For example, in a 2010 Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) report, bilateral agencies compared the ratio of the central unit evaluation budget with the overall official development assistance (ODA) budget that each unit was charged with evaluating. Based on these calculations, it was found that bilateral agencies spent, on average, 0.16 per cent of ODA on evaluation (the range being from 0.02 to 0.61 per cent). On the other hand, multilateral development banks calculated that ratio in relation to their administrative budgets, spending, on average, 1.38 per cent of those budgets on evaluation (the range being from 0.50 to 2 per cent).[14]

30. Most of the Secretariat entities had relatively small numbers of evaluation staff. Those entities with an evaluation unit had on average of three professional staff, with the majority of evaluations conducted by consultants. Staff conducting and/or managing evaluations had stronger competencies in evaluation than programme managers engaged part-time in evaluation activities.

31. Insufficient financial and human resources, and inadequate evaluation competencies, were some of the most frequently cited challenges in the focal point survey and interviews. When asked what was most needed to strengthen the evaluation function in their entity, slightly more than half of the focal points interviewed (17 out of 30) indicated the need for financial resources. Half of the focal points interviewed (15 out of 30) cited the need for increased human resources, and 6 stated that stronger evaluation competencies were required, including the presence of staff with an evaluation background, expertise and proper training. Similarly, 18 out of 27 focal points in the survey volunteered their view

[13] OIOS analysis of data from 2012-2013 and 2014-2015 proposed programme budgets. According to the 2012-2013 proposed programme budgets, the Office for Outer Space Affairs planned to spend over 2 per cent of its total budget on evaluation, followed by the Department of Public Information, ECA, ESCWA, the Office of Legal Affairs and the United Nations Office at Vienna with allocations ranging between 0.50 and 1 per cent. At the lower end, according to the form 12 submissions, the Department of Political Affairs, the Department of Safety and Security, the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, the Officer of the Special Adviser on Africa, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) had zero per cent allocated to evaluation. However, according to the annual reports of UN-Women, its total expenditure in evaluation was 1.6 per cent of overall expenditure in 2012 and 1.3 per cent in 2013.

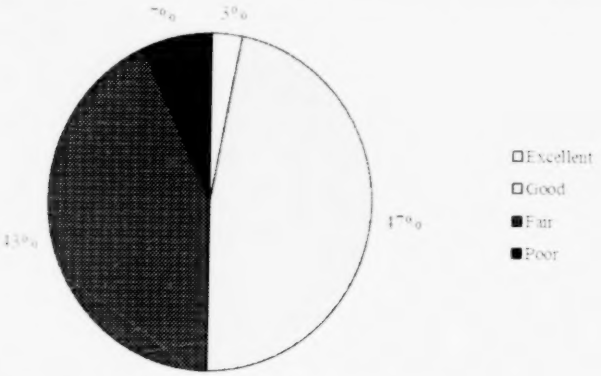
[14] See *Evaluation in Development Agencies, Better Aid*: series (Paris, OECD, 2010). Averages were based on central evaluation units of bilateral agencies for: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and United States of America; and administrative budgets of the African Development Bank, the Asian Development Bank, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the Inter-American Development Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank Group.

that inadequacy of financial resources was one of the biggest obstacles that they faced, while 12 out of 27 identified insufficient human resources and 8 out of 27 reported a lack of evaluation expertise in their entity.

The evaluation culture overall within the Secretariat continues to be unsupportive

32. Evaluation culture within the Secretariat continues to be characterized by limited senior management support and staff buy-in. While six focal points volunteered their view in the survey that support for evaluation had improved, nine focal points, when asked in interviews what was most needed to strengthen evaluation, specified greater senior management and staff buy-in, a response similar to that in the 2010-2011 biennium. Some elaborated that evaluation still met with some resistance because management viewed it as having the potential to make the entity look bad, or as being an oversight burden and/or a compliance exercise. The level of support changed depending on the tone set by senior management. Evaluation focal points also mentioned that staff buy-in could improve through better incorporation of lessons learned and use of evaluation results. When asked in the survey to rate their entity's evaluation culture (i.e., senior management support and staff buy-in), 50 per cent of focal points gave a rating of fair or poor (see figure VII).

Figure VII
Ratings of the evaluation culture of 30 evaluation functions, 2012-2013



Source: OIOS survey. No focal points selected "very poor".

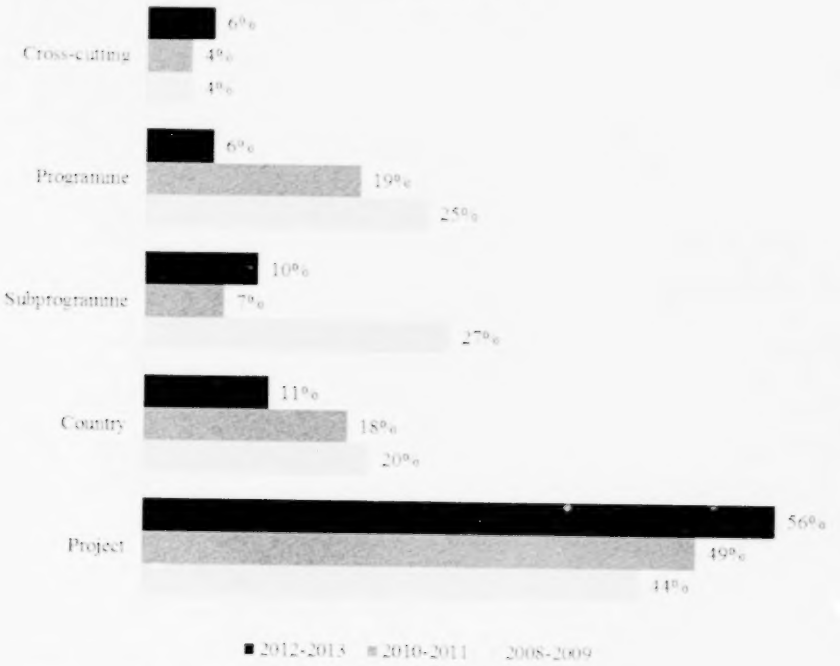
Gaps in evaluation remain across the Secretariat

33. With most evaluation in the Secretariat concentrated in a relatively few number of entities, gaps in evaluation coverage have remained within the Organization. In 2012-2013, although 25 entities submitted 298 evaluation reports, 4 entities (UNEP, UNHCR, UNODC and UN-Women) accounted for the majority (61 per cent) of all reports, and 2 (UNEP and UN-Women) accounted for 41 per cent of all reports. These four entities generally had greater field presence and more operational work which may have contributed to larger numbers of evaluations; nevertheless, large parts of the Organization were still not subject to evaluation. Additionally, gaps in evaluation coverage also remained across the Secretariat's strategic priority areas for the 2012-2013 biennium. Sixty-three per cent of sampled

reports addressed the Secretariat's work in the promotion of sustained economic growth and sustainable development and 23 per cent covered the development of Africa. Three reports addressed the promotion of justice and international law and two covered human rights. No reports covered disarmament.

34. Furthermore, figure VIII illustrates that the primary focus of evaluation continued to be at the project level, thus making it difficult to secure a broader picture of performance at the Organizational, programme and subprogramme levels. The scope of evaluation has been narrowing: 56 per cent of sampled reports focused on projects in 2012-2013, compared with 49 per cent in 2010-2011 and 44 per cent in 2008-2009. Programme-level evaluations decreased to 6 per cent from 19 per cent in 2010-2011 and 25 per cent in 2008-2009.

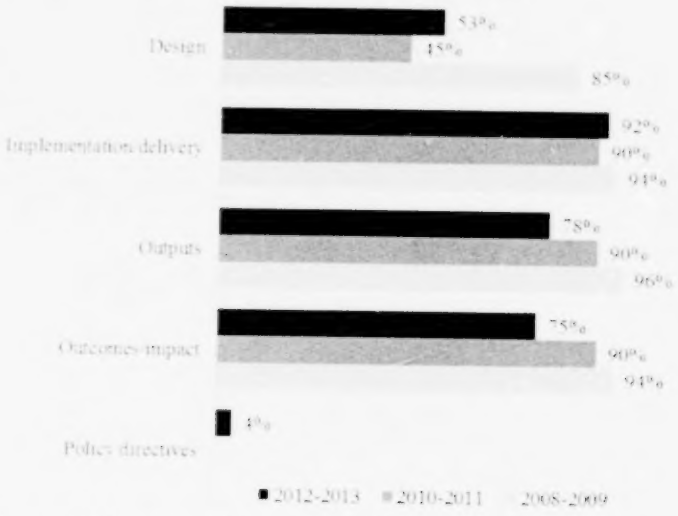
Figure VIII
Scope of sampled evaluation reports, 2008-2013



Source: OIOS assessment of sampled evaluation reports.

35. Additionally, figure IX demonstrates that the proportion of sampled reports focusing on implementation or delivery of work remained steady at 92 per cent in 2012-2013. Fewer reports focused on outcomes or impact, the proportion having decreased from 90 per cent in 2010-2011 to 75 per cent in 2012-2013.

Figure IX
Focus of sampled evaluation reports, 2008-2013



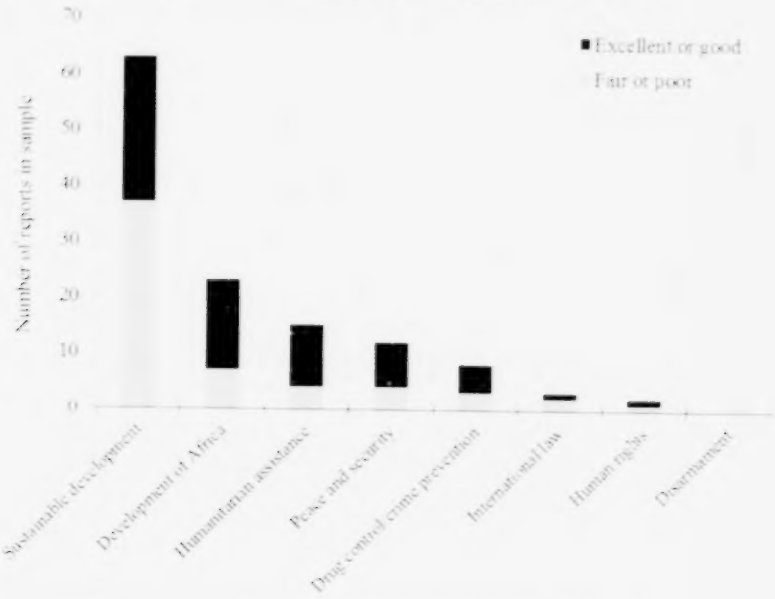
Source: OIOS assessment of sampled evaluation reports.

IV. Selected results from sampled high-quality evaluation reports

36. To synthesize the cross-cutting results from evaluation reports finalized in 2012-2013, OIOS analysed the contents of the 51 out of 102 sampled reports that received good or excellent ratings for the overall quality of their results section and categorized them by the Secretariat's relevant strategic priority areas for the biennium.[15] Figure X below compares the number of reports that received positive ratings for the overall quality of their results section with the total number of reports in the sample.

[15] See General Assembly resolution 65/262.

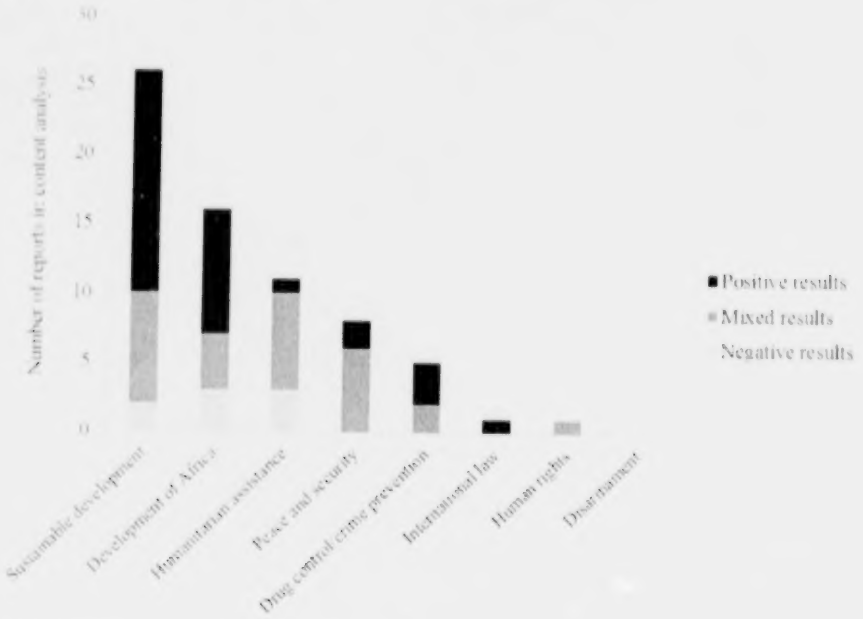
Figure X
Overall quality of results section by priority area, 2012-2013



Source: OIOS assessment of 102 sampled evaluation reports. There were no reports that received a "very poor" rating.

37. Some of the key themes from the 51 evaluation reports assessed as having good or excellent ratings for the overall quality of their results section are discussed below. Of these reports, just below half (24) presented mixed evaluation results, 22 presented largely positive results and 5 largely negative results. The results further broken down by priority area in figure XI. As 49 per cent of these reports evaluated projects, their applicability to overall performance is limited.

Figure XI
Type of evaluation results by priority area, 2012-2013



Source: OIOS assessment of results from 51 evaluation reports.

Promotion of sustained economic growth and sustainable development

38. In the area of promotion of sustained economic growth and sustainable development, 26 reports received good or excellent ratings for the overall quality of their results section. Of these, the majority (16) presented largely positive results. Key points included the following:

- The Organization effectively convened and facilitated meetings where Member States exchanged experiences and reached regional and subregional consensus on development issues.
- The Organization contributed to increased awareness and knowledge over a range of socioeconomic issues through the provision of knowledge products such as materials/publications, capacity-building projects and technical assistance.
- Projects were effective in increasing knowledge-sharing among statisticians from African national statistical offices and subregional organizations, and increasing the quality, timeliness, availability and regional relevance of statistics on internationally agreed upon development goals.
- The Cities and Climate Change Initiative established itself as a global leader on the issue by introducing the urban dimension into climate change agreements at global, regional, national and local levels.
- Interventions aimed at eliminating violence against women had greater impact when aligned with national and local strategies.

- Little documented evidence existed on the extent to which the Organization's outputs have contributed to development (e.g., in areas of subregional development goals, and climate change adaptation), thus making it difficult to verify the Organization's contribution.

- Gender and human rights concerns were not integrated into many of the projects.

Maintenance of international peace and security

39. In the area of maintenance of international peace and security, seven reports received good or excellent ratings for the overall quality of their results section. Of these, the majority (five) presented mixed results. Key points included the following:

- The Mission planning for the United Nations Support Mission in Libya was effective in strengthening the Organization's understanding of the country and building joint ownership across the system, resulting in a unified vision and approach.

- The United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti demonstrated resilience in providing logistical support and facilitating coordinated emergency relief immediately after the earthquake.

- While the Civilian Predeployment Training team was underutilized and attendance at trainings was relatively low, recipients of the Training initiatives provided positive feedback and the initiatives were important in preparing new field mission staff.

- In the area of integrated electoral assistance, there was need for further guidance and collective outreach and training on policy and practice, and improved coordination and implementation of the Organization's activities.

Development of Africa

40. In the area of development for Africa, 16 reports received good or excellent ratings for the overall quality of their results section. Of these, the majority (nine) presented largely positive results. Some of the key points emerging from these evaluations have been summarized under other priority areas. Additional key points included the following:

- Knowledge products contributed to increased awareness of and debates on regional integration, social policy and trade policy, and generated multi-stakeholder country-driven processes which helped build capacities and expand good governance, gender equality and equity.

- Capacity-building programmes on trade were relevant both for negotiating trade facilitation agreements and to the skills and business development needs of micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises by linking them to the supply chains of transnational companies.

Promotion of human rights

41. In the area of promotion of human rights, one report received a good or excellent rating for the overall quality of its results section. This evaluation on the support to the follow-up and implementation of recommendations made by treaty

bodies, special procedures and the universal periodic review presented largely mixed results. Key points included the following:

- Institutional shortcomings (including differing visions of the Organization's role, inadequacy in the quality of reporting, a cumbersome system for approving texts, and weak information and knowledge management) presented challenges to the Organization's ability to provide effective support.

Effective coordination of humanitarian assistance efforts

42. In the area of effective coordination of humanitarian assistance efforts, 11 reports received good or excellent ratings for the overall quality of their results section. Of these, the majority (seven) presented largely mixed results. Key points included:

- The Organization played a key coordinating role with respect to the humanitarian, civil and military actors by engaging with and building alliances among them.
- The Organization's response to the drought in the Horn of Africa brought mixed results: in some places, the initial response did not meet international standards and better coordination was required. Nevertheless, once emergency assistance was mobilized, provisions were distributed effectively to some communities.
- It was noted that the Organization's response to the influx of Somali refugee into Ethiopia brought mixed results, with the complex geopolitical environment and the magnitude of the refugee influx presenting challenges. Confusion centring around mandates and inadequate coordination mechanisms affected the response negatively.

Promotion of justice and international law

43. In the area of the promotion of justice and international law, one report received a good or excellent rating for the overall quality of its results section. This evaluation on the implementation of the West Africa Coast Initiative in Sierra Leone presented largely positive results. Key points included the following:

- Law enforcement agencies were able to build inter-agency cooperation through the West Africa Coast Initiative and Transnational Organized Crime Unit construct.
- There were difficulties in prosecuting transnational organized crime cases.
- Stakeholders expressed the desire for the Transnational Organized Crime Unit to become a formal subcommittee, with the status of the entity changing from administrative to legal, and its sustainability increasing thereby.

Disarmament

44. No evaluation reports in the area of disarmament were submitted, indicating that there is minimal evaluative evidence on how the Organization is performing in this priority area.

Drug control, crime prevention and combating international terrorism

45. In the area of drug control, crime prevention and combating international terrorism, five reports received good or excellent ratings for the overall quality of their results section. Of these, the majority (three) presented largely positive results. Key points emerging from these reports included the following:

- The Organization played an effective coordinating role in combating drug trafficking by involving national and international partners through inter-agency and inter-State cooperation agreements.
- The Paris Pact Initiative contributed to the countering of trafficking and consumption of opiates originating from Afghanistan by providing data, analyses and expertise.
- The Organization was relevant in helping a Member State reform and strengthen its penitentiary system in compliance with the United Nations standards on treatment of prisoners.
- While the provision of training to law enforcement officers on drug trafficking was considered relevant, the courses were offered only in one language, trainers had limited right of access, and lack of data hampered the assessment of the training's impact.

V. Evaluation workplan of the Office of Internal Oversight Services

46. In 2014-2015, the Inspection and Evaluation Division will have completed evaluations for the following entities:

- Department of Peacekeeping Operations/Department of Field Support (Headquarters)
- Department of Safety and Security
- ECA
- ECLAC
- ESCAP
- International Trade Centre
- United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)
- UNCTAD
- UNHCR
- UN-Women

47. The following thematic evaluation will have been completed in 2014-2015:

- Monitoring and evaluation of the Millennium Development Goals: lessons learned

48. In peacekeeping evaluation, the following evaluations will have been completed during 1 July 2014-30 June 2015:

- United Nations protection of civilians in peacekeeping
- Standing police capacity
- Protection from sexual exploitation and abuse in peacekeeping
- Results of national police capacity-building
- Integration between peacekeeping operations and United Nations country teams
- Department of Peacekeeping Operations senior leadership training

49. For the 2016-2017 biennium, the Inspection and Evaluation Division further refined its risk-based work-planning approach, which was founded on the most recently available information from: (a) the Secretariat-wide risk assessment exercise of the OIOS Internal Audit Division, completed in 2014; (b) the assessments of Secretariat entities' monitoring and evaluation capacity, completed in 2013; and (c) the Secretariat Risk Register.

50. Based on this risk assessment, the Inspection and Evaluation Division identified the following Secretariat entities for evaluations to be completed in 2016-2017:

- Department of Political Affairs
- ECE
- ESCWA
- Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
- Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
- UNHCR
- UNRWA
- Substantive support and programme components of the executive direction and management components of the programme budget section on "Overall policy-making, direction and coordination": the Executive Office of the Secretary-General, and the Offices of the Special Representatives of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict on Sexual Violence in Conflict, and on Violence against Children

51. With regard to UNHCR, based on the risk information available and consideration of the Office's size, scope of work and complexity of operations, OIOS has identified UNHCR to be at high risk in terms of results and mandate achievement, thereby warranting more regular and annual independent evaluation.

52. The following thematic evaluation has been identified for completion in 2016-2017:

- Work of the regional commissions (ECA, ECE, ECLAC, ESCAP and ESCWA) based on the completed evaluations of each entity from 2015 to 2017

53. Tentatively planned evaluations in peacekeeping during 1 July 2015-30 June 2016 include:

- Force generation
- Robust peacekeeping
- "Rehatting" in peacekeeping missions

54. The Committee for Programme and Coordination may wish to consider which evaluations from the 2016-2017 workplan it would like to review at its fifty-seventh session in 2017, as well as request OIOS to undertake any additional evaluations not included in its current workplan.

VI. Follow-up on the recommended actions of the Committee for Programme and Coordination

55. In its consideration of the previous biennial report (A/68/70), the Committee for Programme and Coordination recommended that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to:[16]

- Take further, concrete measures to develop capacity for evaluation within the Secretariat programmes, with support provided by OIOS and external oversight bodies in terms of guidance and methodological advice (A/68/16, para. 153).
- Continue to make better use of in-house expertise, including, where possible, expertise available within OIOS, to carry out evaluations in the different entities of the Secretariat, taking advantage of the experience acquired by the internal and external oversight bodies, and to ensure that all efforts are made to avoid duplication and/or overlapping of evaluation functions in the Secretariat (A/68/16, para. 154).
- Ensure that senior managers' compacts present adequate programme objectives and performance measures in order to fulfil given mandates in accordance with relevant rules and regulations, and that the evaluation function receives due consideration in the performance appraisal of the senior managers (A/68/16, para. 155).
- Take concrete measures at the appropriate levels to ensure that the existing significant gaps in evaluation coverage and the lack of evaluative evidence on performance are addressed (A/68/16, para. 156).
- Entrust OIOS with harmonizing, to the extent possible, a format for its evaluation reports, including findings, conclusions and recommendations (A/68/16, para. 157).

56. OIOS has undertaken several initiatives to address these recommendations. Regarding the recommendations contained in paragraphs 153 and 154 of the report of the Committee for Programme and Coordination on its fifty-third session, OIOS has supported capacity development for evaluation within Secretariat entities through: a knowledge-sharing series on evaluation-related topics (e.g., on peacekeeping evaluation and evaluation at the World Bank); evaluation skills training sessions (e.g., on policy evaluation and case-study methods); and consultations and advice on issues related to strengthening evaluation (e.g., the development and revision of evaluation policies, which contributed to an increase in policies in 2012-2013).

57. Furthermore, in December 2013, OIOS released the first "evaluation scorecards", which provided an assessment of each Secretariat entity's evaluation practice and capacity in 2010-2011, using a common set of indicators and benchmarks for performance. These scorecards provided an overall snapshot of

[16] The General Assembly endorsed these recommendations in its resolution 68/20.

strengths and gaps in evaluation coverage, and some entities have reported using them to determine strategies for improving their evaluation functions.

58. Regarding the recommendations in paragraphs 153 and 154 of the report of the Committee for Programme and Coordination on external oversight bodies, in 2015, the Joint Inspection Unit completed an analysis of the evaluation function in the United Nations system whose purpose is to help strengthen the capacity of the evaluation function to meet professional standards and address emerging and global challenges across the United Nations system.[17] OIOS shares workplans and holds bimonthly meetings with the Board of Auditors and ad hoc meetings with the Joint Inspection Unit to discuss issues of mutual interest and holds an annual tripartite meeting to address oversight and coordination.

59. Regarding the recommendation in paragraph 155 of the report of the Committee for Programme and Coordination, OIOS monitors the implementation of recommendations from its evaluations and provides related performance results during the compact assessment. Also, the Secretary-General introduced two changes to the compacts, which encompassed: (a) streamlining them to make them more strategic by focusing on the top five programmatic priorities of each senior manager and the transformational management reform projects, in addition to objectives mandated by Member States and (b) having the Management Performance Board review the compacts and programme performance reports simultaneously. The reports submitted to the Board include a section on challenges and lessons learned, including lessons learned from evaluation.

60. Regarding the recommendation in paragraph 156 of the report of the Committee for Programme and Coordination, further to the activities described above, OIOS shared with Secretariat entities the revised and updated Inspection and Evaluation Division manual, which includes additional guidance on strengthening methods and approaches to assessing performance.

61. To respond to the recommendation in paragraph 157 of the report of the Committee for Programme and Coordination, OIOS developed guidelines and templates for its evaluation reports in the revised evaluation manual, and ensured consistency in respect of the format of its evaluation reports.

VII. Conclusion

62. A robust evaluation function continues to be a critical tool for assessing the Organization's performance, through which accountability can be enhanced and lessons can be learned to achieve stronger results. Yet, in the report on its fifty-third session, the Committee for Programme and Coordination "expressed its concern that, despite OIOS actions and initiatives ... the goal of ensuring the application of evaluation findings on programme design, delivery and policy directives in the Organization was far from being reached, and that the overall capacity for evaluation remained inadequate".[18] While the improvements noted in the present report are encouraging, more needs to be accomplished in order for evaluation to reach its full potential as an instrument for reflection and action. This entails, inter alia, a more robust culture for evaluation including senior management support and

[17] JIU/REP/2014/6.

[18] See A/68/16, para. 148.

staff buy-in, enhanced capacity including stronger staff competencies and increased resources, and better-quality evaluation reports. Improvement is also needed with respect to a greater mainstreaming of human rights and gender considerations into evaluation.

63. Not all Secretariat entities require the same kind of evaluation. Evaluation could also be better tailored to the needs of Secretariat entities in order to ensure better coordination and avoidance of duplication among oversight functions. Those entities that provide management, administration or other services to support substantive programme delivery and/or entities with limited mandates may be better served by developing programme impact pathways and conducting performance audits on a regular cycle. Programme impact pathways would provide a visual road map which could convey what an entity aims to achieve and how it will achieve its aims; they would also present a framework for determining the level of programme implementation at which to focus evaluations, inspections and performance audits. This shift would enable all Secretariat entities to assess their performance more regularly so as to improve their results.

64. The General Assembly, in its resolution 69/237, expressed its cognizance of the fact that the United Nations Evaluation Group and relevant partners had designated 2015 as the International Year of Evaluation. This provides an opportune time for taking steps to enhance evaluation so that it is fully utilized to support evidence-based decision-making in respect of how the United Nations works, its achievements and areas for improvement. In order for this to occur, the gaps identified in this report (namely, insufficient resources for evaluation, inadequate staff competencies, and limited buy-in from senior management and staff) must be closed. It is with these gaps in mind that OIOS makes the following three important recommendations for strengthening evaluation in the Secretariat.

VIII. Recommendations

Recommendation 1 (see sect. III, result A):

65. **Entities that do not currently have an evaluation policy (the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management, the Department of Public Information, the Department of Safety and Security, the Office of Legal Affairs, the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, the United Nations Office at Geneva, the United Nations Office at Nairobi and the United Nations Office at Vienna) should develop one.** They should cover the key components of a good policy, as described in the United Nations Evaluation Group norms and standards for evaluation policies, including the overall purpose and role of evaluation in the entity, by whom and how evaluation will be conducted, and evaluation planning and follow-up.

Indicator of achievement: Evaluation policy adopted

Recommendation 2 (see sect. III, results A and B):

66. **In order to strengthen their overall evaluation capacity, all entities should ensure that each of the following procedures is in place**:

- Developing an evaluation workplan

- Developing action plans for implementing evaluation recommendations
- Tracking and/or monitoring the implementation of evaluation recommendations
- Sharing and/or disseminating evaluation reports
- Sharing and/or disseminating lessons learned from evaluation
- Feeding evaluation results back into programme planning and implementation

Indicator of achievement: Applicable procedures in place and in use

Recommendation 3 (see sect. III, result C):

67. **The Department of Management, in consultation with OIOS, should improve the existing guidelines for planning and formulating the estimated resources (regular budget and extrabudgetary) for monitoring and evaluation activities in the programme budgets.** The revised guidelines should be provided to all Secretariat entities in time for consideration in formulating the 2018-2019 budget.

Indicator of achievement: Secretariat evaluation focal points assess revised guidelines for their clarity, and the reported resources are independently assessed to enable a more accurate reflection of monitoring and evaluation.

(*Signed*) Carman L. **Lapointe**
Under-Secretary-General for Internal Oversight Services
March 2015

Annex I

List of entities included in the report

1. Department of Economic and Social Affairs
2. Department of Field Support
3. Department for General Assembly and Conference Management
4. Department of Management
5. Department of Peacekeeping Operations
6. Department of Political Affairs
7. Department of Public Information
8. Department of Safety and Security
9. Economic Commission for Africa
10. Economic Commission for Europe
11. Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
12. Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
13. Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia
14. International Trade Centre
15. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
16. Office for Disarmament Affairs
17. Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States
18. Office of Internal Oversight Services
19. Office of Legal Affairs
20. Office of the Special Adviser on Africa
21. Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
22. Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
23. United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
24. United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
25. United Nations Environment Programme
26. United Nations Human Settlements Programme
27. United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
28. United Nations Office at Geneva
29. United Nations Office at Nairobi
30. United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs
31. United Nations Office at Vienna
32. United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East

Annex II

Methodology for the review of evaluation reports

1. In identifying evaluation reports, the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) requested all focal points to submit reports finalized in 2012 or 2013. OIOS received 379 documents, representing 26 Secretariat entities. The following did not submit reports: Office for Disarmament Affairs, Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, Office of Legal Affairs, United Nations Office at Geneva, United Nations Office at Nairobi and United Nations Office at Vienna.

2. OIOS reviewed the 379 documents to verify that they met the basic requirements of the Office in respect of evaluation reports. In total, 298 were screened as evaluation reports, which represented 25 entities. The Department of Safety and Security submitted one that was not considered to be an evaluation.

3. From among the 298 evaluation reports, a modified random sampling of 102 reports was conducted for further assessment (see table below).

Sampling methodology

Number of reports by entity	*Percentage of reports included in sample*
1 report	100
2-5 reports	75
6-15 reports	50
16 reports and over	20

4. All 102 reports in the sample were assessed to determine their quality, focus and scope. A total of 29 standards were used in the quality assessment. Several sections/aspects of the reports were assessed to ascertain quality, including the executive summary, introduction, methodology, background, results, conclusions, and recommendations and the format. In determining the overall rating, the results section was given double weight. In order to ensure that the quality assessment was as impartial as possible, OIOS contracted an independent evaluation expert for its conduct.

5. In addition, the 51 reports that received good or excellent ratings for the overall quality of their results section were categorized under the relevant strategic priority areas of the Organization and assessed to determine key results (see resolution 65/262).

Annex III

Comments received from Secretariat entities on the draft report[a]

Department for General Assembly and Conference Management

Thank you for your memorandum dated 11 February 2015 sharing the draft report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) on strengthening the role of evaluation and the application of evaluation findings on programme design, delivery and policy directives. We appreciate the opportunity to provide comments.

In table 1, included in paragraph 8 (p. 6) of the draft report, we note that the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management is listed under the column "Unit not dedicated to evaluation (includes other activities within a multifunctional division)". We respectfully disagree and strongly feel that the Department should be listed under the column "Dedicated evaluation unit within a multifunctional division" as we do have a dedicated unit.

In my memo of 5 November 2013 addressed to you on the final draft report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on Secretariat evaluation Scorecards (attached), I highlighted several key points. In response to the OIOS United Nations Secretariat evaluation scorecards 2010-2011, the Department established a unit in 2009 that carries out multiple functions, including evaluation. The functions include: (a) monitoring; (b) evaluation; (c) risk management; and (d) statistical verification. This unit, the Monitoring, Evaluation, Risk Management and Statistical Verification Unit, reports to the Director of the Central Planning and Coordination Division, Department for General Assembly and Conference Management. This falls under subprogramme 2, Planning and coordination of conference services, of section 2 of the proposed programme budget. Additionally monitoring and evaluation units were set up in our sister duty stations at Geneva and Vienna. Therefore, there does exist a mechanism in the Department dedicated to evaluation.

The Monitoring, Evaluation, Risk Management and Statistical Verification Unit prepares an annual report that is submitted to and considered at the Department management group. The central role of the Unit in programme performance reporting also gives it a chance to assess the programme delivery of the Department as a whole. In addition, it manages a global eSurvey and is responsible for summarizing the evaluations by Member States of the Department's performance. Furthermore, its activities are guided by the Department's strategic operational and policy needs throughout the year.

Since 2014, the Department has been a member of the United Nations Evaluation Group. The Department is making all necessary efforts to ensure its compliance with the standards set by the Group. The Department seeks further guidance and clarification from the Group on the methodologies set for evaluation. In respect of internal controls set for monitoring and evaluation, and sufficient budget allocation for resources, these have already been in place since the establishment of the Monitoring, Evaluation, Risk Management and Statistical Verification Unit.

[a] In the present annex, the Office of Internal Oversight Services provides the full text of comments received from Secretariat entities. This practice has been instituted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 64/263, following the recommendation of the Independent Audit Advisory Committee.

In paragraph 65 (p. 26), the Department is listed as one of the offices that does not currently have an evaluation policy. We agree with this recommendation since the Department's evaluation policy has yet to be articulated in a standard policy statement. In 2015, the Department will seek OIOS guidance to complete this exercise. I look forward to the collaboration of our two offices in this regard.

Department of Economic and Social Affairs

The report admits that improvements from the previous biennium did not translate into a higher quality of evaluation reports and that "gaps identified in the prior biennium remained in this one, including insufficient resources".

In the case of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, unless the gaps related to insufficient resources are fully addressed, the role of evaluation on programme design, delivery and policy directives will remain less than optimal. The three recommendations contained in the OIOS report are themselves subject to these prevailing gaps, so the conditions for their full implementation are not present. It is unclear how insufficient resources will translate into developing and implementing evaluation action plans, implementing evaluation recommendations and tracking and reporting evaluation resources. These evaluation activities may not be delivered fully under these conditions and in the current environment of budget austerity. Consideration should be given to preparing a Secretariat-wide workplan, along with the necessary resources for its implementation, for deliberation by Member States.

Department of Management

The Department of Management shared its comments on the OIOS recommendations contained in its informal report and wishes to reiterate points that were not reflected in the final draft report.

- Recommendation 1 calls for "entities that do not currently have an evaluation policy (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management, Department of Public Information, Department of Safety and Security, Office of Legal Affairs, Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, United Nations Office at Geneva, United Nations Office at Nairobi and United Nations Office at Vienna)" to "develop one". The Department of Management developed an evaluation policy in 2013 to comply with this requirement. We are concerned, however, that this recommendation goes beyond the norms and standards of the United Nations Evaluation Group, which stipulates for "each organization" to have a policy and not every department in the organization. Preparation of evaluation policies by every department and office of the Secretariat would seem to represent a duplication of efforts. OIOS could assist the Organization in developing one Secretariat-wide evaluation policy, taking into account management views and the resources available for this purpose.

- Recommendation 2 calls for "developing an evaluation workplan" by all entities. The current budget preparation procedure provides for a mechanism that requires departments and offices to plan their main evaluation activities for the biennium within Form 12, which was requested by the Advisory

Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions[b] and endorsed by the General Assembly. It may be advisable for OIOS to coordinate with the Department of Management/Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Accounts prior to requesting any additional workplan in order to avoid duplications. Other procedures identified in recommendation 2 are currently applied to the evaluation activities of the Department of Management as described in the Department's evaluation policy.

- Recommendation 3 calls for the Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Accounts "to ensure that all Secretariat entities consistently and accurately plan and report on evaluation and monitoring resources separately". This recommendation is within the purview of the Office.

In addition, the premise of recommendation 2, as described in the report, is to strengthen the overall evaluation capacity of Secretariat entities. As most of the departments and offices of the Secretariat have neither evaluation functions nor a dedicated unit to conduct and follow up on internal evaluations, it would be appropriate to make a recommendation in regard to the methodological and training support that would be required from OIOS[c] to achieve this goal.

Department of Peacekeeping Operations and Department of Field Support

In reference to the OIOS memorandum (IED-15-0024) on the above topic, I am pleased to inform you that the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Field Support have already implemented recommendations 1 and 2. The Departments first developed evaluation policies for Headquarters and the field missions in 2008. These evaluation policies have twice been reviewed in April 2010 and January 2013 and will be subject to periodic reviews in the future (in accordance with recommendation 1). Recommendation 2, which calls on entities to establish certain procedures — including developing an evaluation workplan, developing action plans for implementing evaluation recommendations and tracking and/or monitoring the implementation of recommendations — has already been applied by the Departments. Copies of the evaluation policies were submitted to OIOS.

Recommendation 3 calls on the Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Accounts of the Department of Management to establish standards and provide guidelines to all Secretariat entities for planning and reporting on evaluation resources. Since the Office is the lead entity on the implementation of this recommendation, we trust that the Department of Management will provide comments.

[b] The following are excerpts from the reports of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions related to the mandates that led to the preparation of Form 12: "that in the future the budget submissions will include information on the effectiveness of the Organization's investment in monitoring and evaluation" (A/60/7, endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 60/255), "should make clear how the outcome of evaluations leads to improvements in mandate delivery budgets (A/64/7, endorsed by the Assembly in resolution 64/245) and should "provide information on the main evaluation activities planned by each department or office" (A/66/7, endorsed by the Assembly in resolution 66/263).

[c] OIOS responsibility to provide guidance on evaluation to all Secretariat departments is highlighted in the report of the Secretary-General (A/60/883/Add.2, pp. 114-116). The report was considered by the Advisory Committee (see A/61/605) and further endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 61/245.

Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

Overall, we welcome the conclusions and recommendations of the OIOS biennial report and are pleased with the manner in which the final report reflected the comments we made on the draft report, in particular the inclusion of what now becomes recommendation 3.

Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

Reference is made to the inter-office memorandum dated 11 February (IED-15-00240) in which you shared with us the draft report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on strengthening the role of evaluation and the application of evaluation findings on programme design, delivery and policy directives.

The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) has no formal comments on this latest draft and has accepted all relevant recommendations. Please find attached a copy of the recommendation action plan that includes the ESCWA management response and progress to date against the relevant recommendations.

Should you have any questions on the recommendation action plan, please feel free to contact the Chief of the Strategy, Evaluation and Partnership Section at ESCWA, Ms. Ramla Khalidi.

I take this opportunity to thank you and the staff at the OIOS Inspection and Evaluation Division for your continued support and cooperation.

Executive Office of the Secretary-General

This is in reference to your note of 12 February 2015, in which you requested comments on the draft biennial report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services entitled "Strengthening the role of evaluation and the application of evaluation findings on programme design, delivery and policy directives". This note also responds to your note of 3 December 2014 on the implementation status of the recommendations contained in the previous OIOS biennial report. In particular, this is in reference to the query on actions that might have been undertaken by the Executive Office of the Secretary-General to address the recommendations raised by the Committee for Programme and Coordination at its fifty-third session.

I note that the Executive Office of the Secretary-General has been identified as one of the entities that will be evaluated by OIOS in the 2016-2017 biennium workplan under the context of evaluation capacity.

I understand that, as part of the 2012-2013 OIOS biennial study on strengthening the role of evaluation, your office worked closely with all Secretariat programmes to collect relevant information related to their evaluation activities. The Executive Office of the Secretary-General has nothing further to add to the results garnered through that Secretariat-wide exercise through which information was requested from and submitted by all programmes to OIOS.

With regard to the recommendation of the Committee for Programme and Coordination contained in paragraph 155 regarding the senior manager compacts

and related performance appraisals, the Secretary-General has continuously worked to improve the effectiveness of the compacts and assessments. While the compacts have always cross-referenced the relevant budget documents, in terms of the programme objectives and performance measures required to fulfil the mandates and also require compliance with regulations and rules, the following two important changes have been introduced along the lines of the recommendations issued by the Committee:

- The compacts of 2013 were streamlined to make them more strategic by focusing on the top five programmatic priorities of each senior manager and the transformational management reform projects, in addition to the objectives established in the programme and planning documents of the Organization as mandated by Member States.

- Since 2011, the Management Performance Board has been reviewing the senior manager compacts and the programme performance reports simultaneously. In the version of these reports that are submitted to the Board as part of its assessment of senior manager performance, there is a section entitled "Challenges and lessons learned", where programme managers are expected to include what they have learned from their internal evaluation exercises.

As reflected in the draft report, there were some positive developments throughout the Secretariat in the biennium 2012-2013. Notwithstanding this, the Secretary-General remains committed to further strengthening evaluation throughout the Organization and, as such, in order to ensure that this issue receives the necessary senior management oversight and direction, it is being included as an item on the agenda of the Management Committee.

International Trade Centre

The International Trade Centre (ITC) endorses the findings presented in the (draft) report regarding the evaluation function conducted at United Nations Secretariat entities, including ITC, in the period 2012-2013 and shares a common understanding with the report on the role and future development of the evaluation function in the United Nations system. ITC found the analysis contained in report to be useful as well, particularly the analytical frames used in assessing evaluation processes and procedures, the high quality of the evaluation report, and the evaluation capacity and culture, which will serve as useful references for ITC to further enhance its evaluation function. ITC therefore congratulates OIOS on the quality and timeliness of the draft report.

ITC accepts the three recommendations provided in the (draft) report. In this respect, ITC is either already taking similar actions, as recommended in the (draft) report, within current strategic planning framework of ITC, or is planning to take actions to address the recommendations in 2015-2016.

In anticipating the next OIOS Inspection and Evaluation Division biennial report for the period 2013-2014, ITC expects that the evaluation work of ITC will contribute to the analysis and findings on two key thematic areas, including promotion of sustained economic growth and sustainable development, and

development of Africa, on which ITC trade development interventions have yielded concrete development results.

Besides, we provided two specific comments on the text of the report:

- Paragraph 5: The use of the term "independent evaluations", when they are undertaken by OIOS, next to "self-evaluations", when they are undertaken by the entities, infers that the independence and credibility of the evaluations undertaken by the entities is being questioned in the document, which is detrimental to the purpose of "strengthening the role of evaluation" in the United Nations. Therefore, we propose to replace the term "independent evaluations" by "centrally conducted evaluations", and "self-evaluations" by "entity-conducted evaluations".

- Paragraphs 32 to 35: In terms of the evaluation culture, the next biennial report should take into account the crucial areas related to improving the conditions for better "evaluability" at the up-stream of an intervention cycle, namely, the management function designs interventions for results and monitors progress. Based on ITC experiences, the key element to enhance an evaluation culture is that managers are better trained and understand evaluation data requirements and the methods used in evaluation so that they can plan and implement activities accordingly.

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

On behalf of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), this is to confirm that we endorse the report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on strengthening the role of evaluation and the application of evaluation findings on programme design, delivery and policy directives.

Office of the Special Adviser on Africa

The Office of the Special Adviser on Africa received with appreciation the formal draft of the OIOS report on strengthening the role of evaluation and the application of evaluation findings on programme design, delivery and policy directives and would like to thank you for the continued consultative process followed by OIOS in the preparation of its report.

In the meantime, Office of the Special Adviser on Africa would like to highlight the fact that following its separation from the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States and the appointment of a new Under-Secretary-General as Special Adviser on Africa in May 2012, a comprehensive and inclusive self-evaluation of the activities was developed and conducted by the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa against both the strategic framework for the years 2012-2013 — drafted and approved before the appointment of the new Under-Secretary-General — and Secretary-General's Bulletin ST/SGB/2003/6, on the functions and responsibilities of Office. The main findings of the self-evaluation exercise indicated that a number of mandates had been added to Office by the General Assembly in consecutive resolutions, to be implemented "within existing resources", therefore,

creating a gap resulting from a lack of the financial and human resources necessary for the implementation, thus raising the need to strengthen the Office in order to effectively implement its mandates. The new identified major additional mandates for the Office are following:

- **Establishment and implementation of the United Nations monitoring mechanism to review commitments made by African countries and their development partners toward Africa's development**. Following deliberations at the 2008 high-level meeting on Africa's development needs, the General Assembly adopted resolution 63/1 on a political declaration on Africa's development needs and resolution 66/293. The Office was mandated to establish the monitoring mechanism, serve as the substantive secretariat and consult extensively with a wide spectrum of stakeholders, including African countries, traditional and emerging development partners, the private sector, academia, the media, foundations and civil society organizations, as well as with the United Nations system organizations, departments, funds and programmes in order to mobilize their contributions to the biennial review process. The Office was also mandated to submit to the Assembly a monitoring report on a biennium basis, and the first report (A/69/163) was submitted and reviewed by Member States during the Assembly debate October 2014 on Africa's development.

- **Strengthening of the interdepartmental task force on African affairs**. Pursuant to resolutions 67/293, 67/294 and 68/278, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to continue to take measures to strengthen the task force, including through enhancing joint advocacy for international support to Africa, assisting in the mobilization of support for the implementation of relevant programmes and initiatives on Africa and championing approaches and solutions that take into account the enabling environment that peace and security provide for development. In these resolutions, the Assembly also called upon the Office, through the task force, to ensure further coherence and an integrated approach for United Nations support to Africa. Furthermore, the members of the task force backstop the monitoring mechanism by providing contributions to the biennial review process.

- **Following up on the implementation of all global summits and conferences related to Africa**. In resolutions 67/293 and 67/294, the General Assembly also called upon the Office to follow up on the implementation of all global summit and conference outcomes related to Africa, including the implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 2012 (Rio+20). In these resolutions, the Assembly also called upon the Office to monitor the implementation of the post-2015 development agenda in Africa upon its adoption.

- **Promoting greater coherence in the work of the United Nations system in support of the New Partnership for Africa's Development through the Regional Coordination Mechanism**. In resolution 68/301, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to promote greater coherence in the work of the United Nations system in support of the New Partnership for Africa's Development, on the basis of the agreed clusters of the Regional

Coordination Mechanism for Africa. As a member and co-chair of the Advocacy and Communications Cluster of the Regional Coordination Mechanism, the Office further promotes coherence in the work of the United Nations system together with the Directorate of Information and Communication of the African Union Commission and other relevant United Nations entities.

The methodology for the comprehensive self-assessment exercise included a desk review and assessment of the above-mentioned documents and other related documentation, and consultation with Member States, the task force and United Nations entities with a field presence in Africa as well as consultations with the Controller, the Department of Management and the Executive Office of the Secretary-General. On the basis on these consultations, and taking the evaluation findings into account, in resolutions 67/293 and 67/294, as well as 68/278 and 68/301, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to take measures to strengthen the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa in order to enable it to effectively fulfil its mandate, including monitoring and reporting on progress related to meeting the special needs of Africa and coordinating the interdepartmental task force on African affairs, to ensure a coherent and integrated approach for United Nations support for Africa, including following up on the implementation of all global summit and conference outcomes related to Africa, including the implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development.

Subsequently, the issues identified were articulated by the Secretary-General in a separate report that laid out the results of the evaluation and was entitled "Strengthening the Office of Special Adviser on Africa" (A/68/506). The report was submitted to the General Assembly.

Against this backdrop and taking into account that an evaluation unit could not be established owing to the small size of the Office, the Office kindly requests that, on page 6 of the formal draft report of the Office of the Internal Oversight Services on strengthening the role of evaluation and the application of evaluation findings on programme design, delivery and policy direction, under table 1 (Secretariat structures of the evaluation functions by the end of 2013), the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa be placed under the category "No evaluation unit but evaluation activity".

In addition, and in response to paragraph 65 recommendation 1 suggesting that the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa should develop an evaluation policy, the Office has started developing an evaluation policy, and OIOS support in this regard would be much appreciated in order for the Office to swiftly implement the recommendation.

Thank you for your kind attention to this matter.

United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

Thank you for the draft report on strengthening the role of evaluation and the application of evaluation findings on programme design, delivery and policy directives.

I welcome this important initiative to promote learning and encourage improvement in evaluation, and reaffirm that strengthening evaluation capacity and promoting gender-responsive evaluation in the United Nations system are important priorities of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women).

UN-Women appreciates very much the information and analysis on gender equality provided in the report. However, as expressed in the previous comments of UN-Women (see A/68/70), the gender equality perspective could be further enhanced and synergies developed, by using the indicator on the integration of gender equality, into evaluation from the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in the analysis of the current report.

Based on findings in paragraph 24 stating that "incorporating gender and human rights issues remained a weak cross-cutting area" and that about " half of the 102 reports (52) considered gender issues in their results; and 19 reports considered them in their methodology" and on the conclusions in paragraph 62 indicating that "improvement is needed with regard to greater mainstreaming of human rights and gender considerations into evaluation", the report would benefit from a specific recommendation on how the departments and entities of the United Nations Secretariat could improve performance in this area.

UN-Women agrees with all three recommendations of the report. I am pleased to note that UN-Women has already implemented recommendations 1 and 2. UN-Women appreciates recommendation 3 on strengthening the planning and reporting on evaluation resources in the entities of the United Nations Secretariat.

I would like to note that, in the case of UN-Women, information on evaluation expenditure is provided in the annual report on evaluation function to the Executive Board (UNW/2014/3). In this regard, I would like to ask to for a correction to endnote 13 (para. 28), which states that UN-Women had zero resources allocated for evaluation. This statement is not factually correct as the UN-Women total expenditure in evaluation in 2012 was 1.6 per cent, and in 2013 was 1.3 per cent of overall UN-Women expenditure (see UNW/2014/3).

Thank you again for this important report on evaluations functions, and we look forward to the implementation of recommendations and next steps in strengthening evaluation in the Secretariat.

United Nations Environment Programme

The OIOS report on strengthening the role of evaluation and the application of evaluation findings on programme design, delivery and policy directives provides a useful general overview of the status and trends in evaluation work across the United Nations Secretariat entities.

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) welcomes the OIOS risk-based approach to its work planning. This should mean that Secretariat entities that have lower installed capacities for evaluation receive more in-depth attention from OIOS.

While aggregate data identifies some interesting general trends, it is less useful as feedback to individual Secretariat evaluation functions if they are to use such studies to improve themselves.

The findings in some cases come from survey data and in other cases from the OIOS evaluation scorecard assessments of Secretariat entities. Some of the general conclusions need to be regarded with caution as they are derived from assessment methods that have some flaws.

For example, there appears to be a problem with how evaluation policies were assessed and scored. The UNEP evaluation policy achieved a score of 1.9 (out of 2.0) in the OIOS "Scorecard" assessment that presumably underpins this analysis. A score of 2.0 is required for "high adherence". However, the range for " medium adherence" was from 1.9 to 0.1 and appears to encompass a very broad range of "adherence", from very good evaluation polices to very weak policies, with zero being "no policy available". How the method arrives at the score from the assessment of the policy against the parameters used in the OIOS evaluation scorecard study has not been specified. The method therefore lacks transparency and, moreover, the aspects of the policy that were not deemed compliant in the OIOS review have not specified. UNEP previously suggested that a broader range of scores say, 2.0-1.6, be used for "high adherence" and, given that some policy aspects are more important than others, suggested that a weighting system be adopted to reflect this in the assessment method.

Given these methodological problems, it is unsurprising that the average assessment of evaluation policies changed little as the mid-range score encompasses very strong to quite weak evaluation policies across the Secretariat.

The report highlights a finding that policies received generally lower ratings for: not identifying competencies for evaluators (with 12 policies not mentioning them at all) and not defining criteria for selecting evaluations. It is a matter of judgement as to which aspects of the United Nations Evaluation Group norms and standards need to be enshrined in a policy document as opposed to other documents that set out the operating procedures of the evaluation function. UNEP evaluators have published peer reviewed academic journal articles on the issue of evaluation selection and priority setting in the organization, yet we chose not to include the operational detail of evaluation selection and work planning in our policy. Similarly, the specific competencies of evaluators are specified in detailed job descriptions and in Evaluation Terms of Reference rather than in the policy.

Finally, while UNEP was deemed "not to have met all of the standards" used in the OIOS assessment of evaluation policies, the United Nations Evaluation Group professional peer review of the UNEP Evaluation Office (2012) assessed UNEP evaluation policy very positively: "The panel finds the evaluation policy to be well designed and appropriate". In addition, in the most recent Joint Inspection Unit study of the UNEP evaluation function (2014), the Unit assessed the evaluation policy in the highest category: The policy covers all United Nations Evaluation Group criteria as well as other good practices as identified by the Joint Inspection Unit. Triangulation is a key principle in reaching evaluative conclusions and we would encourage OIOS to consider referring to independent third party assessments of the evaluation functions of Secretariat entities where available in future studies.

The UNEP Evaluation Office thinks that the report quality assessment criteria are on the whole comprehensive and sound (although these are not mentioned in this report). However, we have previously observed that some of the criteria used are in some cases somewhat arbitrary and are not specifically driven by the United Nations Evaluation Group norms and standards.

The format of an evaluation report should be driven by its intended utility. For example, the OIOS "quality" criterion requiring the separation of findings from evaluative judgements does not make for easy reading and uptake of report findings by the intended users. Another issue relates to the specification of who should implement recommendations. It is not always the case that the evaluation team "knows best". It is acceptable for a recommendation to be made with options as to who might implement it. The follow-up phase to the evaluation, the preparation of the recommendation implementation plan, often being a more appropriate document to capture the final and agreed responsibility for recommendation implementation.

There are also very many criteria to assess report quality, it is unclear whether OIOS regards them all to be of equal significance or whether they are they weighted. In the UNEP internal assessment of evaluation report quality (we have systematic records of this for every report since 2006 to date and quality is independently benchmarked for Global Environment Facility (GEF)-funded evaluations against the World Bank and the United Nations Development Programme), we place the most emphasis on the evidence-based assessment of performance and on the internal consistency of the report.

In this OIOS study, and in contrast to assessments of the quality of UNEP evaluation reports in the United Nations Evaluation Group professional peer review, the most recent 2014 Joint Inspection Unit assessment and annual GEF Independent Evaluation Office assessments, UNEP is not placed in the highest category for evaluation report quality. We were, unable to discern (from the scorecard study that underpins these findings) which attributes of our reports would require, in OIOS opinion, further enhancement. If such detail were available we could compare it to our own internal systematic assessments of evaluation report quality, and put this feedback to good use.

The report concludes that with the following: "the primary focus of evaluation continued to be at the project level, thus making it difficult to have a broader picture of performance at the Organizational, programme and subprogramme levels. The limited scope of evaluation has been worsening: 56 per cent of the sampled reports focused on projects in 2012-2013, compared to 49 per cent in 2010-2011 and 44 per cent in 2008-2009."

Another perspective on this data is that, as an evaluation culture in the Secretariat develops, it is likely to begin with an increase in the numbers of evaluations done — but initially these are likely to be at the project level. As evaluation functions mature, their emphasis is likely to shift towards more strategic higher level evaluations. The conclusion that "the scope of evaluation is worsening" may prove unfounded.

Our experience in undertaking evaluations at the programme, subprogramme or Organizational levels shows that higher level performance is often difficult to assess without a sound basis of evaluative evidence to draw from; project evaluations provide this basis. Additionally, simply counting the number of evaluations at higher

levels is not always a good indicator. A very well done strategic evaluation may have long-lasting utility — simply counting the number of reports in a biennium would not account for this. For example, UNEP conducted a formative evaluation of the UNEP programme of work in 2011 — yet the study continues to influence senior management and governing body deliberations to this day with recommendations and lessons from the 2011 study shaping development of the 2018-2021 medium-term strategy.

Finally, paragraph 57 claims that the "scorecards provided an overall snapshot of strengths and gaps in evaluation coverage within the Secretariat, and entities have used them to determine strategies for where and how to improve their evaluation functions." UNEP supports the first point but observes, with respect to the second, that the scorecard method did not disclose the detail of how each parameter was assessed, limiting an evaluation function's ability to determine what specifically would need to be improved for a higher assessed performance.

United Nations Human Settlements Programme

Thank you for your letter dated 11 February 2015 (IED-15-0024) and for sharing with us the draft report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) on strengthening the role of evaluation and the application of evaluation findings on programme design, delivery and policy directives.

The report provides useful insight into the evolution and practice of the evaluation functions in United Nations agencies. I am pleased to find that there were some positive developments in 2012-2013 regarding the Secretariat's evaluation functions and that progress made in the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) to strengthen the evaluation function is acknowledged. As you will be aware, during the 2012-2013 biennium, I established an independent Evaluation Unit and approved the UN-Habitat evaluation policy.

Moving forward, the UN-Habitat focus is to continue to deepen the institutionalization of the requirements of the evaluation policy to ensure that the evaluation coverage and evaluation use are improved throughout the agency. I believe this is in line with the recent OIOS evaluation of UN-Habitat, which concluded that there was evaluative evidence that UN-Habitat had been effective in delivering its targeted outputs, but investments in outcome evaluations were found to be inadequate.

In the 2015 International Year of Evaluation, I hope this report will further help bring to the attention of Member States the importance of the evaluation function and the challenges that we are facing in building and strengthening a culture of evaluation. Given the financial constraints that many agencies are currently facing, including UN-Habitat, we need to find more ways to better support the strengthening of the evaluation function and allocation of resources in order to respond to demands for evidence of results and effective delivery.

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) welcomes the OIOS biannual report on strengthening the role of evaluation and the application of

evaluation findings on programme design, delivery and policy directives as the report offers an OIOS perspective on a fast-evolving subject, which increasingly gains in importance and recognition: evaluation. UNODC has contributed throughout the process of this evaluation and takes all final recommendations into full consideration. As often is the case with high-level exercises, specific and concrete aspects of the subject under consideration may be hidden or lost. In particular, UNODC points out that the report unfortunately represents an average picture only, not doing full justice to the very uneven developments within specific agencies with regard to their evaluation function. Therefore, UNODC kindly requests OIOS to reconsider its methodology so that the unevenness and variety of evaluation experiences within different programmes be fully captured, rather than representing an overall view, which does not do justice to the differences. It is therefore noteworthy to state that there is actually no "Secretariat's evaluation function", but rather distinct evaluation functions, corresponding to each programme, with very different and distinct independent evaluation outfits.

UNODC welcomes the statement made in the report that "resources to evaluation remain insufficient" and would be delighted to see OIOS develop a formula as to how sufficient resources should be established.

Furthermore, the report mostly examines a limited sample of evaluation reports. This sample is not fully representative, nor can a deduction be made from this small sample as to whether or not an evaluation culture exists within a specific programme. UNODC has delivered specific ideas on how to improve the methodology and looks forward to a continued, constructive dialogue with OIOS.

In addition to the above, UNODC is pleased to see that its evaluation activities have been rated very positively and assures OIOS that continued efforts will be made to further strengthen the UNODC evaluation culture.